

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A relay server comprising:

communicating means capable of communicating with a plurality of network devices; and

connection information holding means for holding connection information of the network devices capable of communicating by the communicating means,

wherein the communicating means carries out communication with the network devices in accordance with the connection information, and relays data forwarding between the specified network devices in accordance with connection demand information generated from one of the network devices.

2. A communication system comprising:

a plurality of network devices; and

a relay server connected to the plurality of network devices by a network,

wherein the first network device establishes a communication path with the relay server, and generates a connection demand for communication with the second network device to the relay server when communicating with the second network device, and

the relay server relays the communication between the first and second network devices by using the communication path established in advance in accordance with the connection demand from the first network device.

3. A communication system according to claim 2 wherein the first network device is located in a local system, and connection to the first network device from an outside of the local system is limited.

4. A communication system according to claim 2 wherein the first network device is connected to the relay server via a gateway device having an address converting function.

5. A facsimile system comprising:

- a facsimile machine connected to an inner network;
- a gateway device for connecting the inner network to an outer network; and
- a relay server connected to the outer network for relaying communication between the gateway device and another gateway device,
 - wherein the facsimile machine transmits and receives image data by being connected to the relay server via the gateway device in advance.

6. A facsimile system according to claim 5 wherein the relay server manages the facsimile machine to be connected in accordance with identifying information specific to the facsimile machine.

7. A facsimile system according to claim 5 wherein a plurality of facsimile machines within the inner network and another inner network can be connected to the relay server via the gateway device and the another gateway device, and the relay server manages each of the plurality of facsimile machines to be connected in accordance with identifying information specific to each of the plurality of facsimile machines.